



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 13, 2018

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Mayor Rusty Bailey Recognizes Winners of Entrepreneurial Challenge Bootcamp

Seven schools fielded 16 teams made up of 67 students who were able to learn from business leaders

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Mayor Rusty Bailey recently welcomed students from around the city, local business leaders, and entrepreneurs to a celebration that honored the winners of the Mayor’s Entrepreneurial Challenge Bootcamp, which tests the skills of young people while encouraging them to seek excellence in the business world.

Mayor Bailey thanked community members who contributed time and resources to provide such an enriching experience to the 67 participating students from seven area schools. The students ran mock companies that were subjected to a computer-graded curriculum designed by The Advancement Academy.

Participating schools included John W. North High School, La Sierra High School, Martin Luther King High School, Ramona High School, Riverside STEM Academy, Riverside Virtual School and Arlington High School with its STEM LEAPS team. The event was held April 2-4 at SolarMax, and the recognition was held recently on the Grier Pavilion on the 7th floor of City Hall.

“The Mayor’s Entrepreneurial Challenge is a highlight because it combines two of Riverside’s real strengths – the business community and the emerging leaders at our local schools,” Mayor Bailey said. “We are blessed to have so many successful entrepreneurs who are not just willing, but eager, to share their wisdom with the next generation of business leaders.”

Two teams from Martin Luther King High School captured first and third place in the event. Second place went to Arlington High School’s STEM LEAPS team. STEM LEAPS -- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in Law Enforcement and Public Safety (LEAPS) – teaches young people how STEM subjects they study in school are used in the public safety fields.

The Mayor’s Entrepreneurial Challenge Bootcamp gives eligible high school students from the City of Riverside a unique, hands-on experience with business and entrepreneurship. Students learn directly from business leaders how to establish and run their own company, experience what professional life is like and lay the groundwork for a successful future.

Students explore concepts like teamwork, leadership and the evolving business world. They engage in “deep dive” discussions into contemporary business topics, decision-making exercises, presentations, computer simulations, and managing mock companies developed from the ground up.

“Every year, I look out at the students who are competing and wonder, ‘Is the next Jeff Bezos of Amazon out there?’” Mayor Bailey said. “That’s a lofty goal, of course, but the students are encouraged to not limit themselves.”

Each school in Riverside can send a group of 4-5 students, and each group acts as a management team for a mock company that has been in business for one year. The competing companies operate within the same industry sector. Each group begins the week with an equal share of the industry’s market, and the same financial situation.

Through the use of a computer simulation, each student-led company operates 10-12 quarters of business during the course of the program. Students are expected to make important management decisions that directly impact the outcome of the company, including production, marketing, and financial decisions. Students also are challenged to respond to case studies that affect the operation of their organization, involving everything from internal human resource issues to the importance of ethics in the business world and the advantages and challenges of doing business internationally.

At the end of the week’s simulation, the “Company of the Week” is recognized. Local volunteers do the judging, and the winning team receives prizes from the Mayor’s Office. The first-place team from King High received \$1,500, which was split by five students; the Arlington STEM LEAPS team received \$1,000, which was split by five students; and the third-place King High team received \$500, which was split by four students.

Companies that contributed to the success of the event included SolarMax, a major provider of solar power systems in Southern California; Bourns Inc., a worldwide electronics company that is heavily involved in local events; and the Advancement Academy.

“We appreciate the generosity of SolarMax in not only sponsoring prize money, but also providing mentors and allowing us to use its facility for the challenge,” Mayor Bailey said. “SolarMax is truly a testament to the power of partnership in our city, and we appreciate everything they do for Riverside.”

Mayor Bailey also thanked Gordon Bourns of Bourns Inc. for contributing financially to the event, but also taking three days out of his schedule, which frequently involves international travel, to spend time with students.

“The Bourns name is synonymous with successful entrepreneurship in Riverside,” Mayor Bailey said. “But Gordon and his team never hesitate to find time to support our community, and we are so grateful for that!”

Mayor Bailey called William Ferguson of the Advancement Academy “the driving force” behind the event.

“This amazing event wouldn’t have happened if it weren’t for you!” Mayor Bailey said.